

Appl. No. 09/944,376
Amdt. Dated September 17, 2003
Reply to Office Action of June 17, 2003

Pending Claims:

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A process for manufacturing a composite sheet capable of elastic stretch ~~an~~ and contract in one direction, said process including the steps of:

- (a) providing a first web capable of elastic stretch and contraction and having a top surface and a bottom surface;
- (b) continuously feeding the first web along one direction;
- (c) extending the first web in the one direction within a range that permits elastic stretch and contraction of the first web;
- (d) allowing the extending first web to retract by an elastic contraction force of the web;
- (e) continuously feeding at least one second web along the one direction, said second web comprising a nonwoven fabric formed of fibers which are deposited in a layer without mechanical entanglement;
- (f) superimposing said at least one second web on at least one of said top surface and said bottom surface of the first web after said first web has been extended and retracted in steps (c) and (d); and

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(g) joining the first and second webs in an intermittent manner along the one direction.

Claim 2 (previously amended): The process of Claim 1 further including, subsequent to the step (f) the following steps:

(i) a secondary extension step wherein the joined first and second webs are extended in the one direction within a range that permits elastic stretch and contraction of the first web; and

(ii) a secondary contraction step wherein the extended first and second webs are allowed to retract by action of an elastic contraction force of the first web.

Claim 3 (previously amended): The process of Claim 2, wherein the second web comprises synthetic fibers which are initially engaged with each other by at least one of mechanical entanglement and fusion bonding and, subsequently in the step (e) the thermoplastic synthetic fibers are disengaged so that they are individualized.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The process of Claim 1 wherein the at least one second web comprises two second webs with the one second web joined to the top surface of the first web and another second web joined to a the bottom surface of the first web, the second webs being distinguishable from each other by at least one property selected from the group consisting of basis weight, density, type of the thermoplastic resin, diameter, and length of the fibers thereof.

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Claim 5 (previously amended): The process of Claim 1 wherein said first web comprises at least one of a fabric capable of elastic stretch and contraction and composed of thermoplastic synthetic fibers, and a film capable of elastic stretch and contraction and made of a thermoplastic synthetic resin.

Claim 6 (previously amended): The process of Claim 1 wherein said thermoplastic synthetic fibers in the second web comprise continuous fibers.